

Another post office service that helps to confuse the Perfin collector, when trying to rationalize a postmarked Perfin that does not, at first glance, appear to be the correct or normal usage for a particular firm, is the Cash On Delivery scheme.

In Great Britain the scheme, or service, came into operation on 29 March 1926. Under this scheme a customer was able, without prepayment, to order goods to be sent to them and pay the postman on delivery. Providing the goods and charges were below 5 pounds. If above this amount and up to 40 pounds, the customer would be informed that their order had arrived at the post office and be requested to pay up and take delivery. However, should the customer have changed their minds, they were at liberty to refuse and the post office had to return the package to the consignor.

As is usual with new systems, it had its critics. The normal flood of protest and letters of opinion to editors of the national newspapers began to make their appearance. One such opinion was from A. E. Cowper, a director of Selfridge, who considered that, though the charges were high when compared with the charges for postal orders, the scheme would not pay. "I think," he wrote to the Evening News, "that the Government will be both shocked and startled at the difficulty and expense they will have to contend with."

The charges at that time were: a trade charge up to 10s - 4d.; up to £ - 6d.; up to £2 - 8d.; up to £5 - 10d.; up to £10 - 1s.

After this rather scathing attack on the system, it might be thought that it was doomed to failure. Not so. Illustrated is a registered letter, sent COD, on the reverse of which is a label giving details of the amount to be collected - yes, from none other than Selfridge. This carries a date of 5 January 1932.

As the COD items had to be presented to an official of the post, the postmarks will, most probably, be those used for counter work. Hence the conflict that can arise when encountering postmarks different from those normally seen on the same Perfin. The same circumstances also apply when the Perfin has been used to pay the postage and/or fee on a registered letter. Or used on a parcel label to pay the postage. A company which illustrates that aspect very nicely is, again, Selfridge. This enormous London department store complex came into being in 1909. Situated on the northside of Oxford Street, it was opened on 15 March 1909. Besides the usual departments there were Reception rooms, Library, Bureau de Exchange and a post office. The parcel labels illustrated were used at their own post office.

The COD letter sent from Edgeware Road in 1932, has a triangle in the top left hand corner, printed in black text INLAND/C.O.D. on a solid red, which unfortunately will not reproduce.

Perfin type a is to be found on the early issues, whereas type b appears to come into used with the KGV issues.